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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 28 July 1993, at 10 a.m.

President: Mrs. ESCALER (Philippines)
(Vice-President)

- Earthquake in Japan and floods in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and the United States of America
- Admission of new members to the United Nations [19] (continued)

  (a) Application for admission

  (b) Letter from the President of the Security Council

  (c) Draft resolution

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In the absence of the President, Mrs. Escaler (Philippines), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

EARTHQUAKE IN JAPAN AND FLOODS IN BANGLADESH, INDIA, NEPAL AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The PRESIDENT: Before turning to the item on our agenda for this morning, may I, on behalf of all the members of the Assembly, extend to the Government and the people of Japan, recently struck by an earthquake, and to the Governments and peoples of Bangladesh, India, Nepal and the United States of America, recently struck by floods, our deepest sympathy over these major disasters, which have caused tragic loss of lives and extensive material damage.

May I also express the hope that the international community will show its solidarity and respond promptly and generously to any request for help.

I now call on the representative of Japan.

Mr. HATANO (Japan): Madam President, I wish to thank you for your kind words addressed to the Government and people of Japan. The earthquake in the northern part of my country took a very heavy toll in lives and material damage, but, as the people in the area recover from their loss and work to rebuild their lives, I am sure they will derive strength and encouragement from knowing that they have the sympathy of peoples around the world.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of Bangladesh.

Mr. MAJID (Bangladesh): Madam President, I should like to thank you for your kind words of sympathy for my Government and for the people affected by the monsoon floods that have inundated large areas of Bangladesh. I shall of course convey your sentiments to my Government. This gesture of sympathy will certainly be appreciated.

(Mr. Majid, Bangladesh)

Floods are a recurrent problem in Bangladesh, a problem that we are trying to tackle in a comprehensive manner with help and support from our development partners. The present floods have affected an estimated 10 million people in the north and south-eastern regions of Bangladesh. Standing crops and thousands of hectares of land have been damaged.

The Bangladesh Government has mobilized all available resources to provide relief to the affected people. The Prime Minister has personally been visiting the affected areas. Public leaders and Government agencies are supervising relief operations. The people of Bangladesh are facing this disaster with courage and fortitude. We are grateful to friendly countries and organizations which have offered us support and assistance.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of India.

Mr. ANSARI (India): Madam President, my delegation is grateful to you for the sympathy you have expressed to the Government and people of India over the grievous loss of lives and property on account of the current floods in the northern parts of the country. May I also join you in expressing our sympathy to Japan, the United States, Nepal and Bangladesh, which have similarly suffered losses from the fury of nature.

The flood disasters in different parts of the globe have once again demonstrated the vulnerability of mankind to the ravages of nature. Natural disasters are a way of life, and the only way to deal with them is to alleviate the sufferings of the people, contain the damage and take measures to prevent their recurrence. International sympathy and support go a long way in helping the Governments concerned to cope with the situation.

The dimensions of the flood disaster in India are indeed enormous. It has affected over 35,000 villages, covering an area of a little over

(Mr. Majid, Bangladesh)

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The Bangladesh Government has mobilized all available resources to provide relief to the affected people. The Prime Minister has personally been visiting the affected areas. Public leaders and Government agencies are supervising relief operations. The people of Bangladesh are facing this disaster with courage and fortitude. We are grateful to friendly countries and organizations which have offered us support and assistance.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of India.

Mr. ANSARI (India): Madam President, my delegation is grateful to you for the sympathy you have expressed to the Government and people of India over the grievous loss of lives and property on account of the current floods in the northern parts of the country. May I also join you in expressing our sympathy to Japan, the United States, Nepal and Bangladesh, which have similarly suffered losses from the fury of nature.

The flood disasters in different parts of the globe have once again demonstrated the vulnerability of mankind to the ravages of nature. Natural disasters are a way of life, and the only way to deal with them is to alleviate the sufferings of the people, contain the damage and take measures to prevent their recurrence. International sympathy and support go a long way in helping the Governments concerned to cope with the situation.

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(Mr. Acharya, Nepal)

Information is still incomplete due to the disruption of transport and communications, and the final death toll is feared to be over 3,000. There has been an extensive loss of private property, standing crops and livestock. The highways linking the capital city, Kathmandu, with the rest of the country have been blocked by landslides and several major bridges have been washed away. Floods and landslides have damaged hydroelectric power stations and several irrigation systems, and some dams under construction have also been washed away.

Agencies of His Majesty's Government and other relief organizations have been providing food, medical and other assistance to the affected population. But national efforts are unable to cope with the magnitude of the devastation. Shortage of supplies and the disruption of transport and communications are affecting the relief operation.

So, while thanking donor countries and multilateral agencies, in particular the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, for the initial relief assistance, I take this opportunity to appeal to the Member Governments, the United Nations and its agencies and non-governmental organizations for assistance at this time of great tragedy and critical need in Nepal.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of the United States of America.

Mrs. ALBRIGHT (United States of America): My delegation greatly appreciates your kind words of sympathy, Madam President. This is a time when human need and suffering transcend politics. Natural disasters affect large and small, rich and poor alike.

The people of the American Midwest share the disappointment and the irrevocable change in their lives with those who are suffering in Bangladesh, India, Japan and Nepal. President Clinton has often said that domestic and foreign policy are two sides of the same coin. There is no clearer demonstration of this than when nations from different parts of the world act together to try to alleviate human suffering.

If any good is to come from natural disaster, it is the resolve with which communities band together and empathize with their fellow human beings. Right now, Americans along the Missouri river are building levees with sandbags sent from Bangladesh. It is clear that the world community is demonstrating its resolve and empathy. We are very grateful.

AGENDA ITEM 19 (continued)

ADMISSION OF NEW MEMBERS TO THE UNITED NATIONS

(a) APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION (A/47/973)

(b) LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (A/47/976)

(C) DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/47/L.63)

The PRESIDENT: I now invite the General Assembly to consider the positive recommendation by the Security Council on the application for admission to membership in the United Nations of the Principality of Andorra.

The Security Council has recommended the admission of the Principality of Andorra in document A/47/976.

(The President)

The draft resolution concerning the admission of this new Member is contained in document A/47/L.63.

In addition to the countries listed in document A/47/L.63, the following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Albania, Australia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Djibouti, El Salvador, Guatemala, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Morocco, Nicaragua, Panama, Philippines, Poland, Portugal and Slovenia.

May I take it that the General Assembly accepts the recommendation of the Security Council and adopts draft resolution A/47/L.63 by acclamation?

Draft resolution A/47/L.63 was adopted (resolution 47/232).

The PRESIDENT: I therefore declare the Principality of Andorra admitted to membership in the United Nations.

I request the Chief of Protocol to escort the delegation of the Principality of Andorra to its place in the General Assembly Hall.

The delegation of the Principality of Andorra was escorted to its place in the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: On this historic occasion it is my pleasure to welcome, on behalf of the General Assembly, the Principality of Andorra as a full Member of the United Nations. I congratulate the Principality of Andorra, and I congratulate the United Nations on the admission of its 184th Member State.

I wish the Government and the people of Andorra peace, prosperity, happiness and every success for the future. I wish to assure Andorra of the full support of the United Nations as it takes its rightful place in the

(The President)

international community as a free, independent, sovereign and peace-loving State.

I now call on the representative of Uganda, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. BABA (Uganda): Let me begin by extending, on behalf of the African Group, our deepest sympathies to the Governments and peoples of Japan, Bangladesh, Nepal, India and the United States over the recent destruction caused by the fury of nature, bringing about unprecedented damage and loss of life in those countries. We call upon the international community at this trying time to come to their aid, especially to the aid of those least able to cope with the disasters.

Turning now to the happy occasion of the admission of the Principality of Andorra to the United Nations, let me, on behalf of the African Group, and on my own behalf, congratulate and most warmly welcome the Principality of Andorra to the family of the United Nations, in which it has sought membership.

We in Africa have no doubt that the Principality of Andorra is fully committed to upholding the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and to fulfilling all the obligations contained therein, as it has pledged itself many times to do.

The Principality of Andorra has, over a long period in its history, shown by example its commitment to peaceful coexistence with different neighbours. It is the fervent wish of our Group to see this coexistence and cooperation extended to all Members of the United Nations. As the Principality of Andorra joins us today as a Member, we wish it prosperity, well-being and stability in the years ahead.

For our part, at this historic moment we should like to express our hope that our representatives in the United Nations system will cooperate fully to

(Mr. Baba, Uganda)

meet the challenges that we face together and will strive to make this world a better place for all of us, and our commitment to those goals.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asian States.

Mr. PAK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): On behalf of the States members of the Asian Group, I have the honour to convey our warm congratulations to the Government and people of the Principality of Andorra on its admission to membership in the United Nations.

With the admission of the Principality of Andorra, the membership of the United Nations has increased to 184 countries, which constitutes another occasion for further strengthening the role and activities of this Organization.

(Mr. Pak, Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

To attain membership in the United Nations at a time when the hopes and expectations that the world's peoples place in the Organization are constantly increasing is of great significance, particularly when the need to further the role of the Organization is becoming ever more pronounced.

In the past few years, a comparatively large number of countries have entered the Organization. This is an eloquent testimony to the fact that post-cold-war international relations are being forged on the basis of diversity. It is, indeed, a reflection of countries' desire to make due contributions to safeguarding world peace and security and to developing cooperative political, economic and cultural relations between States through their positive participation in the activities of the Organisation, guided by the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations.

We are convinced that the Principality of Andorra, with its desire for peace and security, justice and cooperation, will make a good contribution to fulfilling the valuable purposes of the Charter. On behalf of the States members of the Asian Group, I should like once again to express our welcome to the Principality of Andorra and assure it of our fullest cooperation towards the attainment of our shared objectives.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of Poland, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. WLOSOWICZ (Poland) At the outset, let me join all those who have expressed their sympathy with the peoples and Governments of Bangladesh, India, Japan, Nepal and the United States of America.

When the complex of United Nations buildings in New York was designed, it was expected that it would have to accommodate a maximum of 100 delegations.

(Mr. Wlosowicz, Poland)

At that time it was regarded as being far too big. Now we have reached the figure of 184 delegations.

It gives me great pleasure - and I speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States - to welcome the Principality of Andorra to the United Nations family.

Today, as the international community is undergoing most dramatic changes, the role of our Organization is rapidly expanding. Much is expected from us; much remains to be accomplished. We strongly believe that the joint efforts of all States Members of the United Nations will bring us closer to a better world.

Let me express my sincere congratulations to the Government and the people of the Principality of Andorra, and wish them many great successes on the international plane in their new capacity.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of Chile, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. ZUÑIGA (Chile) (interpretation from Spanish): As Chairman of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean countries, I have the high honour of offering the Principality of Andorra an enthusiastic and warm welcome to the United Nations. Our regional group welcomes the addition of this new Member State which, by joining in the remarkable growth in the Organization during the last few years, will strengthen the Organization's universality and its vitality in carrying out its international tasks.

This small European State, which is of such great age and tradition as a figure in the world's political maps, has a history of making it its constant practice to seek accord and consensus in its institutional life. This practice, which today most certainly finds in the United Nations a suitable

(Mr. Zuñiga, Chile)

sphere for application, is one of the principal formulas for peaceful coexistence between nations and one on whose basis it is certainly possible to ease the task of achieving peace and economic and social development, which is at once the shared aspiration and the common good of mankind.

In welcoming the Principality of Andorra at this solemn meeting of the General Assembly, we are sure that we are gaining a new vote for peace and economic and social progress. We are welcoming a State that will contribute to strengthening even further the democratic identity of this world Organization, and our determination to work as one for the noble ideals and objectives that almost 50 years ago were so masterfully set forth by the authors of the Charter of the United Nations, who then renewed, as we renew today, the world's hopes for a constantly better future.

This is the spirit in which the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean welcome the new Member State with satisfaction and feelings of fraternity. They congratulate it; they express their wishes for the well-being of its people and Government; and they assure it of their complete readiness to work closely with it in achieving the noble goals of the Organization.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of Luxembourg, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States.

Mr. WOLZFELD (Luxembourg) (interpretation from French): It is my great pleasure, on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States, to offer to the Government and the people of the Principality of Andorra our warm congratulations on the occasion of Andorra's admission as the 184th Member of the United Nations.

(Mr. Wolzfeld, Luxembourg)

The admission of a new Member States is always a memorable event that marks a further step along our Organization's way towards the full implementation of the principle of universality. Today, it bears witness also to the international community's recognition of the sovereignty of the Principality of Andorra. We are convinced that the new Member State, which will from now on occupy its rightful place in our Assembly - and which, by so doing, will show that it is ready to honour its obligations under the Charter and to support the purposes and principles set out therein - will join in defending the noble ideals of our Organization and will make a positive contribution to our work.

For the Principality of Andorra, which has fiercely guarded its independence and its language since the twelfth century up in its valleys and mountains while adapting its institutions to meet the demands made of a modern State, accession to the United Nations is proof of its desire to work together with other nations in strengthening international cooperation.

All States Members of the United Nations, be they large or small, already old or newly born, share the common responsibility to contribute to strengthening the role of the Organization as a universal instrument capable of effectively safeguarding international peace and security, promoting economic and social development and ensuring respect for human rights.

In this spirit, we are happy to welcome the Principality of Andorra to our midst; we offer Andorra our full cooperation and our best wishes.

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of the United States of America, the host country.

Mr. HICKS (United States of America): As the host country of the United Nations, the United States joins with the other members of the General Assembly in welcoming Andorra as the newest Member of the United Nations. Andorra's membership brings us one step closer to universal membership, a goal we have sought since the inception of the United Nations.

The Andorran people have recently decided on independence, a choice we applaud and respect. We look forward to working together on the basis of the democratic values our two countries share. We welcome the Principality of Andorra.

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Head of Government of the Principality of Andorra, His Excellency Mr. Oscar Ribas Reig.

Mr. Oscar Ribas Reig, Head of Government of the Principality of Andorra, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Head of Government of the Principality of Andorra, His Excellency Mr. Oscar Ribas Reig; I invite him to address the Assembly.

Mr. RIBAS REIG (Andorra) (interpretation from Spanish): I wish first of all, on behalf of the people of Andorra, to express our sincere condolences in connection with the tragedies striking Bangladesh, India, Japan, Nepal and the United States of America. I shall continue this statement in my national language.

(Mr. Ribas Reig, Andorra)

(spoke in Catalan; English text furnished by the delegation)

Today is a historic day for Andorra. My State has been admitted as a Member of the United Nations. We have come to New York to raise our flag among those of other States. In this way we fulfil many of the aspirations of our people and witness the culmination of a process of serene and tenacious transformation. Andorra is no longer a vestige of feudal and medieval law but a State established according to the principles of modern international law. We have thus closed a centuries-long process of judicial formulation that began more than 700 years ago with the documents called the Pariatges and that has finally led to this ceremony.

At this time and on this occasion, it is only fair that I should make special mention of our two Heads of State, Their Excellencies the Co-Princes, who have encouraged, cooperated on and shown their acceptance of the process of institutional modernization. I also wish to recall all my countrymen who, since 1925 when our country first approached the League of Nations, have struggled to make this ceremony a reality.

Furthermore, permit me to say that it is a great personal honour for me to represent the Andorran people here and that I consider myself extremely privileged to take part in this ceremony and carry out this very gratifying duty, because today, as it reaches this landmark, Andorra achieves the goals of normalization and integration into the international community to which many people of my generation and I myself have devoted the best years of our lives.

(Mr. Ribas Reig, Andorra)

I wish to express our sincere gratitude to the Security Council and to the Secretary-General for their support during the admission process. I wish in particular also to express our warmest and deepest gratitude to Their Excellencies the representatives of the French Republic and of the Kingdom of Spain, who are in fact sponsoring the admission of our State today. I request them to convey our sentiments to their respective Governments: the same sentiments that have traditionally marked the frank and loyal cooperation between us, which I am certain will continue and even grow stronger in the future. I am also convinced that, in a similar way, our integration will be consolidated in all that the European Community represents, because we are not only situated within the Community from the territorial standpoint, but also wish to be immersed in it from the standpoint of its philosophy and of the model of society that it proposes.

We are a small country, but one that is aware of the value of authenticity and of the fact that, in a world that is in certain ways inordinately large, small dimensions may offer a positive contribution to balanced coexistence. What should be the ideal size of a State? Neither economics nor political science can give us a definitive answer to this question, of course. Aristotle, in his Politics, says that the size of the polis should permit all the inhabitants to be familiar with each other's character; it should be possible, he adds, completely to survey the territory from a mountaintop. Andorra possesses these human and geographical features.

Along with other micro-States of the world, we fear political giantism all the more as we are bound more closely to the notions of measure and accessibility to political life, characteristics of our country that should be

(Mr. Ribas Reig, Andorra)

safeguarded. Indeed, we still believe that man is the measure of all things. I believe that, in a world that must struggle for peace, there is a place for those of us who have chosen to coexist harmoniously and not to impose ourselves. For that reason, in the context of its modest possibilities, Andorra has the firm intention of contributing to world peace and cooperation and of sharing its ancient and never forsaken love of freedom.

I would recall that my country has not been at war since the thirteenth century.

We are a State without natural riches. We have no strength or wealth other than that of our people themselves. We are a country of the Pyrenees, those European mountains that do not form a barrier but a meeting place. The stimulation of the economic development of the Pyrenees is a priority from the standpoints of well-being, prosperity and quality of life, and from those of justice, solidarity and the need to establish firmly and retain the traditional inhabitants in the mountains for reasons of common interest, such as the conservation of nature.

(Mr. Ribas Reig)

Andorra is not a depressed area, however. It has always shown itself to be capable of adapting to changing circumstances in order to achieve a high income level. With the democratic adoption of our Constitution and the opening of our participation in the international scene, as marked by this ceremony, Andorra looks to the future with optimism, trusting in its capacity and in its hopes to make the most of the new opportunities available to it.

Our country is actually a valley, and it may be said that a valley forms a way of life. It is a home; it provides water and a livelihood; in short, it is a community adapted to the measure of the individual and of the family. Just as the large valleys of the Ganges and of the Nile were the cradles of great civilizations, so our little valley of the Valira River has shaped a national identity over the centuries, an identity that has not been forged against anything or against anyone. On the contrary, we have always been a hospitable country, welcoming all those who have come to our valley. It is precisely from the standpoint of our identity that we wish to contribute our collective personality, because identity and universality are perfectly compatible, combining to form a solid base for the exchange of cultures - a necessary foundation for the construction of a free and peaceful world. This is why we, as a country wishing to open itself up to the outside world, first sought to ensure the cohesion of our identity. We were quite certain that to get things done and to communicate them, we needed to be cosmopolitan and multilingual. But to be so, we also need to root ourselves even deeper in our own reality, and our roots are those of Catalan culture. Catalan is our official language. It is the language of Ramon Llull, Ausias March and Salvador Espriu, and it is spoken from the city of Fraga in Aragon to Mahon on

(Mr. Ribas Reig)

the Balearic island of Minorca, and from Salses in the French region of Roussillon to Guardamar in the southern part of Valencia. Catalan is the language in which I have come to address the Assembly and to speak of peace, freedom and brotherhood.

Permit me to conclude by quoting the motto that appears on our national coat of arms: Virtus, Unita, Fortior - action or strength united is all the stronger - a concept that fits in perfectly with the objectives of the United Nations.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Head of Government of the Principality of Andorra for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Oscar Ribas Reig, Head of Government of the Principality of Andorra, was escorted from the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to announce that the flag of the Principality of Andorra will be raised at a ceremony which will take place in front of the delegates' entrance immediately after the adjournment of this plenary meeting.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.